

Message Text

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ACTION IO-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 HA-05 CA-01 AID-05
CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00
NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11 SAA-01 /102 W
-----049955 031157Z /50

R 021351Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9039
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMEMBASSY VIENNA
USMISSION USUN NY

C O N F I D E N T I A L DAMASCUS 4430

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: UNRWA, XF, SY
SUBJECT: UNRWA HOST COUNTRIES MAY RAISE TRANSFER ISSUE AT UNGA

REF: AMMAN 6295

1. AHMAD ABD AL-HADI, DIRECTOR OF THE GENERAL ADMINISTRATION FOR PALESTINE ARAB REFUGEES IN SYRIA, TOLD POLOFF AUGUST 1 THAT ARAB HOST COUNTRIES CONTINUE TO CONSIDER STEPS WHICH CAN BE TAKEN TO HALT TRANSFER OF UNRWA HEADQUARTERS TO VIENNA. AL-HADI SAID SYRIAN UNDERSTANDING IS THAT JORDAN OFFERED ALL THE NECESSARY FACILITIES TO UNRWA AND DID NOT ACCEPT COMMISSIONER GENERAL'S CLAIM THAT THE FACILITIES WERE INADEQUATE. HE ASKED HOW UNRWA COULD JUSTIFY THE INCREASED STAFF AND SUPPORT EXPENSES NECESSITATED BY MOVING TO VIENNA AT A TIME WHEN UNRWA WAS RUNNING ONE OF THE MOST SERIOUS BUDGET DEFICITS IN ITS HISTORY. AL-HADI DID ACKNOWLEDGE THAT SYRIANS PARTIALLY RELIEVED THAT 50 OF
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THE 400 HQ STAFF WOULD REMAIN IN BEIRUT WITH ANOTHER 100 GOING TO AMMAN.

2. AL-HADI SAID THE RECENT MEETING IN AMMAN ATTENDED BY HOST COUNTRIES AND THE PLO HAD DISCUSSED MEASURES WHICH COULD BE TAKEN TO THWART THE MOVE. WHILE VAGUE AS TO WHAT THEIR STRATEGY WOULD BE, HE INDICATED THAT ARAB DELEGATIONS

MIGHT RAISE THE ISSUE AT THE FORTHCOMING UNGA SESSION.
OVERALL, HE GAVE IMPRESSION THAT ARABS WERE GRUDGINGLY
RESIGNED TO THE MOVE BUT WOULD NOT LET IT PASS WITHOUT
FURTHER PROTEST.

3. WHILE JORDAN'S PROBLEMS IN PROVIDING ADEQUATE FACILITIES
PARTIALLY TO BLAME FOR UNRWA'S DECISION TO RELOCATE TO
VIENNA, WE CONCUR WITH RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED IN REFTEL
THAT US GO ON RECORD AT FORTHCOMING ADCOMM MEETING
EXPRESSING RESERVATIONS ABOUT THE DECISION AND ASKING
THAT MOVE BE RECONSIDERED. IT DOES SEEM SOMEWHAT
INCONGRUOUS FOR AGENCY CHARGED WITH A REFUGEE RELIEF IN
MIDEAST TO BE LOCATED IN AN AREA SO FAR REMOVED
BOTH GEOGRAPHICALLY AND OTHERWISE FROM THE
PALESTINIAN PROBLEM.
PELLETREAU

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Message Attributes

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